



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
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JUNCUS ACUMINATUS

TAPERED RUSH

Tapered Rush is a tufted, grass-like perennial with erect stems that are 30-80 cm high, with fibrous roots. Leaf blades are septate. The leaf sheaths surround the stem and have auricles on either side where the blade is attached. Flowers are borne in 5-20 hemispheric heads on the ends of spreading stalks in an open inflorescence subtended by a single leaf-like bract. Each flower is subtended by a single scale-like bract and has 6 sharply pointed tepals that are 3-4 mm long and light brown or greenish in color. There are usually only 3 stamens. The light brown, 3-sided seed capsules are lance-shaped and 3-4 mm long with pointed tips. Each seed is ca. 0.5 mm long and has a net-like surface with a short tip at one end. Mature fruit in late July.

The septate leaves and flowers subtended by a single bract with only 3 stamens separate *JUNCUS ACUMINATUS* from other non-rhizomatous rushes. A hand lens or microscope and technical key are needed for positive identification.